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T H E

C H E S T E R

G A R L A N D.

In F O U R P A R T S.



T E W K E S B U R Y:

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T H E

# CHESTER GARLAND.



P A R T I.

A Merchant of London as many report,  
He for a long time a young lady did court,  
At length by long courtship this handsome lady,  
Did promise this merchant his bride to be.

Of one thing this lady she was ignorant,  
To go his own factor the merchant was bent,  
The ship was freighted, all things ready were  
In order to sail, but the wind was not fair.

So he to make sur: of this lady bright,  
Was married one morning before it was light,  
And married they were, but the same day,  
Tidings came to him the ship must away.

He said, my dear jewel, the thing it is so;  
That I my own factor to Turkey must go.  
It will not be long ere I shall return  
To you home in safety; so dear, do not mourn.

So then he embrac'd, and away did he.  
To be left alone the lady did cry,  
As he is gone from me, I'll do what I can,  
To keep myself free from the scandal of man.

Then this noble lady, with troubled mind,  
She unto her chamber herself close confin'd;  
Wherein we must leave her to sigh and complain,  
And turn to the merchant who's gone o'er the main.

He sail'd into Russia, where, as we find,  
His ship was laden with traffic so fine,  
Then to come to London his course he did steer,  
And what happen'd to him you quickly shall hear.

Upon the wide ocean a storm did arise,  
In which gloomy clouds did darken the skies.  
The wind did blow, and the storms did roar,  
Which drove them almost to the Irish shore.

For several hours by the waves they were tost,  
Expecting each moment their lives would be lost,  
In the midst of their danger one did contrive  
To alter their course, and at Chester arrive.

The thing was soon noised abroad in the town,  
And many shopkeepers to this ship came down.  
One bought the whole cargo, the money 'tis said,  
To this London Merchant in a few days was paid.

One day at a tavern these dealers, we find,  
Stay'd several hours with drinking of wine,  
At length the shopkeeper said, Shall we go  
And get us a miss?—The merchant said, No.

Sir, with such a lady I fairly did wed,  
And never had time to enjoy her bed,  
A woman whose body no man ever knew,  
Then to such a wife I will be chaste and true.

The shopkeeper said, Your conceit is strong,  
To think any woman can tarry so long,  
To wait for a husband. I'll lay what you dare,  
That I can defile your chaste lady fair.

To which the merchant said, Sure I am free,  
To lay ship and money on her chastity,  
Then before witness the thing was agreed,  
And the shopkeeper came up to London with speed.

P A R T II.

HE went to a tavern, and there did presume,  
To call for a bottle of wine, and a room,  
'Twas a widow woman who lived then there,  
For the sake of some money the wife did ensnare.

He asked, If she knew such a one? the reply,  
Was, Yes sir, and she liveth hard by,



He said, Fifty guineas I'll give you straitway,  
If into her chamber you will me convey.

Her answer was to him, As I am alive,  
A way to get you there I will soon contrive,  
She went to this lady, and said, it is so,  
To my dying father this night I must go.

My jewels and plate, and other things brave,  
Lie lock'd in a chest, which by me I have,  
This night in your chamber pray let them lie here,  
To-morrow I'll fetch them, you need not fear.

This lady not knowing her wicked design,  
Gave leave to bring them at night we find,  
This vile sible bawd, to compleat the jest,  
Had him convey'd there lock'd in the chest.

This lady she us'd to keep a great light,  
To burn in her chamber always in the night,  
And as this lady was in a deep sleep,  
The shopkeeper out of the chest did creep.

When he came to the bed like one in amaze,  
He on this lady did stand and gaze,  
And on her right breast he espied a mole,  
Which for some time he did stand to behold.

Likewise on the table he chanced to spy,  
A girdle and watch that on it did lie,  
On the girdle and watch her name was plac'd,  
Which things in his pocket he put up in haste.

Saying, these tokens my wager will gain,  
And now to disturb her I will refrain,  
Then into the chest he went, and there lay  
Until the next morning he was fetch'd away.

So then for West-Chester he did repair,  
And with a good horse he soon come there;  
Crying to the merchant, the wager I've won,  
And if I mistake not thou art undone.

Upon her right breast there is a mole grows,  
Which you in long courting have seen I suppose,  
Sir, there is a girdle and a watch likewise,  
Therefore you may see I tell you no lies.

To see this the merchant wept bitterly,  
 And said, Wicked strumpet thou hast ruin'd me:  
 For to be undone thus makes my heart ache,  
 Now for a substance what course can I take.

To hear this moan some merchants being there,  
 Said to him, brother, do not yet despair,  
 Since you are ruin'd by a vile woman,  
 We'll a make a man of you once more, if we can.

So among them they raised two hundred pound,  
 And set him up shopkeeper in Chester town,  
 But Satan was busy, and to stir up strife,  
 He tempted the merchant to murder his wife.



P A R T III.

**H**E then kept a servant whose name it was John,  
 He then sent a letter to her by his man,  
 These words were in it: At Chester I be,  
 With all expedition dear wife come to me.

Perusing the letter she said with a smile,  
 My dear I'll be with you in a short while,  
 Next day with this young man away she went,  
 Of these ill designs she was innocent.

Riding thro' a wood to make her his prey,  
 He with a penknife did turn and say,  
 Come, lady, alight from your horse directly,  
 For it is order'd here you must die.

To hear these expressions she cry'd out amain,  
 Young man, wherefore is it I must be slain?  
 His answer was for playing the whore;  
 The man that defiled you I knew before.

She said, if I must die I'll take it on my death,  
 No man ever knew me since I drew breath.  
 He said, These excuses will never do,  
 My master sent me to murder you.

He charged me to bring your cloaths and heart,  
 Then I'll not prove false to him for my part.

Thus as she stood trembling, and for life did cry,  
By providence, a hog by chance to come by,

'She said, Save my life and kill that swine,  
And take the heart, he'll think it is mine.  
Likewise take these my cloaths also,  
And give me yours then a wandering I'll go.

For to save her life then he thought good,  
And the thing desired was done in the wood,  
He went home and said, Sir, to finish the strife,  
Here are the cloaths and heart of your wife.

To see this the merchant did blush.  
And into the fire the heart did push.  
Crying there is the heart of a strumpet again,  
Who has been my ruin and fed me with pain.

Thus he in vile manner did burn this heart,  
By which we may see revenge is sweet,  
But now I will leave him mistaken and hear,  
What course of life this lady did steer.

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P A R T IV.

**D**RESS'D in man's apparel she wander'd away,  
But as she was going thro' a town one day,  
She went to a gentleman's door it is said,  
And heartily beg'd for a morsel of bread.

This man came forth, and look'd in her face,  
And said, Young man, it is a disgrace  
For to go a-begging. Art willing said he,  
To serve such a master as now I may be?

Her answer was, yes, and thank you beside,  
Come in and sit down the master reply  
And soon I will put better cloaths on thy back,  
Be but a good servant thou nothing shalt lack.

This man so lov'd her, that in a short space,  
He got her a commission for a captain's place,  
Then she with great courage to Flanders went o'er,  
And was in battle where cannons did roar.



Summer being ended both she and her men,  
 All that were alive, came to England again,  
 For winters quarters it was order'd so,  
 That she and her men to West-Chester should go.

Where walking the streets one night, this lady  
 Look'd into a shop, and her husband did see,  
 For to think of his actions that were so base,  
 Her heart was disturb'd, and mov'd from its place.

Dress'd as a commander, she to him did go,  
 And said unto him, sir, do you know  
 Such a man in this town? tell me if you can,  
 His answer was, Sir, I am the man.

Sir, did you not marry with such a lady,  
 A noble knight's daughter? pray where is she?  
 Yes, I marry'd her, the merchant reply'd,  
 About three years ago she sicken'd and dy'd.

Then unto a justice of peace she retir'd,  
 And told the whole matter, which thing he admir'd  
 He sent for her husband and young man in haste,  
 With the villain that was shut in the chest.

But first he examined the lady's husband,  
 But he with blushes appear'd very wan,  
 And thinking his lady she had been dead,  
 With fear his teeth gnashed in his head.

The justice said, Young man for thee,  
 Didst thou kill this man's wife? tell unto me.  
 He said, Sir, I was sent the lady to kill,  
 Unto her thro' mercy, I shewed no ill.

My master charged me to bring her heart,  
 But he was mistaken that time for his part,  
 For 'twas a hog's heart I brought him to show,  
 And I hope she is living, but where I don't know.

Dress'd in man's apparel, she said to him, John,  
 I am the young lady, iho' dress'd like a man,  
 To hear this the merchant began to sweat,  
 And look'd like a woodcock caught in a net.

And then the shopkeeper was call'd in place,  
 Who on this lady had brought sorrow apace,

He being examin'd was found guilty,  
And order'd to stand in the pillory.

Nay, this was not all, he was order'd to pay,  
Fifty thousand pounds to the merchant next day,  
Which sum was produc'd with great discontent,  
And strait to a prison he quickly was sent.

Saying, I'm ruin'd by playing the cheat,  
And shall be expos'd to shame in the street,  
To prevent all scandal, he took a penknife,  
And stabbed himself which ended his life.

And now the merchant and lady do dwell,  
Together in love, and agree very well,  
And as for the young man who pity'd her moan,  
This lady loves him as a child of her own.

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